

1347. m. 8 (16)

THE Good and Bad PRIESTS.

The GOOD PRIEST.

From Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

A Parish Priest was of the pilgrim train;
An awful, rev'rend, and religious man;
Whose eyes diffus'd a venerable grace,
And Charity itself was in his face;
Rich was his soul, tho' his attire was poor,
As God had cloath'd his own Ambassador---
For such on earth his blest'd Redeemer bore. }
Refin'd himself to soul, to curb the sense,
And made almost a sin of abstinence;
Yet had his aspect nothing of severe,
But such a face as promis'd him sincere; }
Nothing reserv'd or fullen was to see,
But sweet regard, and smiling sanctity---
Mild was his accent, and his action free.
With eloquence innate, his soul was arm'd;
Tho' harsh the precept, yet the preacher charm'd;
He bore his great commission in his look,
And sweetly-temper'd awe, & soften'd all he spoke.
He taught the Gospel, rather than the Law;
And forc'd himself to drive, but lov'd to draw;
For fear but freezes minds---but love, like heat,
Exhales the soul sublime to seek her native seat.
The tythes his parish freely paid, he took,
But never sued, or curs'd with bell and book;
With patience bearing wrong, but offering none,
Since every man is free to lose his own;
Yet of his little, he had some to spare,
To feed the famish'd, and to clothe the bare---
For, mortify'd he was to that degree,
A poorer than himself he could not see!

True Priests, he said, and Preachers of the Word,
Were only stewards of their Sov'reign Lord;
Nothing was theirs, but all the public store,
Entrusted riches, to relieve the poor;
Who, should they starve for want of his relief,
He judg'd himself accomplice with the thief;
And still he was at hand, without request,
To serve the sick, to succour the distressed.
True Priests, he said, were patterns for the rest;
The gold of heaven, which bears the God imprest:
But, when the precious coin is kept unclean,
The Sov'reign's image is no longer seen;
If they be foul, on whom the people trust,
Well may the baser brass contract a rust.

With what he begg'd, his brethren he reliev'd,
And gave the charity himself receiv'd;
Gave, while he taught---and edify'd the more---
Because, he shew'd by proof, 'twas easy to be poor.

The BAD PRIEST.

A Modern Character.

SEE spruce NUGOSO, that pedantic beau!
Mere flash and folly, butterfly and shew;
Whose signal honour stamps the fairest mark
At play-house, op'ra, ball, or in the Park.
Why there? there he displays such pretty things,
As sound the praise of priests, lords, dukes, or k-ings; }
Pray what are these? Lawns, silks, prunellas, rings.
What nature to Nugoso has deny'd,
Fortune and these have bounteously supply'd;
For, working wonders at the soul's expence,
They fill the mighty void of worth and sense.
Full flush'd with these, his gates wide open stand
To welcome visitants, a famous band
Of fops and fribbles---Lord knows who beside,
Toss'd up in all the emptiness of pride.
With well-taught steps they scrape the marble floor,
Rich in politeness, tho' in learning poor;
Not ungenteelly train'd in mopish books,
But vers'd in airs, congees, and simp'ring looks.
Compliments pass'd---"Pray, gentlemen, sit down;
"I'm proud to see you---Jack, here take my gown;
"I hope all's well at home; and what's the news?"
With such like stuff as babbling blockheads use.
The clock strikes three! quick swells the lavish board
With all that æther, earth, or sea afford;
And, strange to say! with well-diffembled face
The mantling coxcomb lisps--unmeaning grace!
From dish to dish his sparkling eye-balls roll,
And all the HARRY rises in his soul;
Slice after slice he cuts with eager gust,
Nor dreams of Irus with his hungry crust.
See the glad board with circling glasses crown'd,
The sparkling bottle, and the bowl profound!
Toast toast succeeds (a blest, but short-liv'd reign)
'Til all the body dances in the brain;
Stories and jests alternate waste the time;
And, zounds! to grace them is not deem'd a crime.
Loud peals of laughter rend the echoing hall,
And streams of nonsense trickle from them all.
So idly pass the wheeling hours away,
'Til night is vanquish'd by the dawn of day, }
And warns Nugoso, in the dumps---to pray.
The DOLEFUL BELL* now strikes his heavy ear,
More dismal far than Mars' loud trump to hear!
Oh! how unlike that pleasing, silver sound,
That calls the pudding, and makes Jack skip round!
"Tell Trudgitt not to wait (Nugoso cries)
"I'm deeply pre-engag'd;" and rubs his eyes---
There let him rub, 'til time metes out that span
Of life, that's useless both to God and Man.

* The Church Bell.

+ His Curate.